



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## SENATOR KLEIN HOLDS KNOW YOUR RIGHTS FORUM FOR IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

JEFFREY D. KLEIN March 3, 2017

| ISSUE: **IMMIGRATION, IMMIGRANT RIGHTS, LEGAL AID OR LEGAL SERVICES**

*Panel of legal experts will field immigration questions from concerned Muslim community members*

**Bronx, NY — Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester), Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj (D-Bronx) and Councilman Ritchie Torres (D-Bronx)**, joined by advocates and community members, held a Know Your Rights Forum on Friday night to provide legal services and educate Muslim community members on their immigration rights as actions by the federal government threaten their well-being.

The forum is a pillar of the Independent Democratic Conference's newly created Immigrant Defense Coalition that includes an expansion of immigrant services available at Senator Klein's district office, as well as an emergency hotline that directs immigrants to appropriate services. Those in need of information and assistance should call **1-800-213-6385**.

"Immigrant communities in New York and across the country need our support as they are faced with uncertainty from the federal government. Tonight's forum was an important opportunity to talk to immigrants and let them know that we stand by them in this time. We must continue to have these discussions and make sure these communities know that there are resources available to them if they need them," **said Senator Klein**.

“Now more than ever we must stand in support of our immigrant communities. This forum was an opportunity, not only to inform immigrants about the resources they have available to them, but to show them that we are continuing to work to defend their rights freedoms. As a community, we must do our part and provide guidance to those who need it the most,” **said Assemblyman Gjonaj.**

“All residents regardless of their immigration status or religious background have rights and protections under city, state and federal laws. These forums aim to ensure that everyone is aware of their rights and alleviate some of the fears that residents may have during this uncertain political climate,” **said Councilman Ritchie Torres.**

The Know Your Rights Forum followed an earlier event at the Bronx Muslim Center in which members of the Jewish and Muslim communities stood together in solidarity against the recent rise in hate crimes across New York and the rest of the nation. On Thursday, Senator Klein announced a legislative package to protect religious freedoms. During the forum, a panel of legal experts fielded immigration questions from the community members.

“The Vera Institute of Justice applauds the Independent Democratic Conference’s pro-immigrant Sanctuary Senate District Initiative. Senator Klein and the IDC have enthusiastically supported Vera’s efforts to ensure that all detained immigrants in the State of New York have access to a lawyer, regardless of their financial resources, and has been in the forefront of making these efforts a reality,” **said Liz Kenney, Vera Institute of Justice.**

“Catholic Charities has long been committed to helping New York State welcome all immigrants, be they families seeking to reunify, refugees, day workers, or children. Our mission is rooted in the respect for the inherent dignity of each person and in striving to create a just and compassionate society. Thus, we stand together with state and city officials and other advocates to protect the rights of our nation's immigrants and refugees in these

difficult and troubling times,” said **Lauren Wyatt, Esq., Staff Attorney, Immigration Court Helpdesk, Catholic Charities Community Services.**

“The Immigration Practice at The Bronx Defenders is committed to serving the Bronx immigrant community in every way we can during these difficult times. We welcome this opportunity to join Councilman Torres, Senator Klein, Assemblyman Gjonaj and others to educate community members about their rights, how to prepare for different scenarios, and to reassure them that we will stand with them, their children, and their families no matter what,” said **Ryan Brewer, Immigration Attorney, The Bronx Defenders.**